(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau

(43) International Publication Date
1 March 2001 (01.03.2001)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 01/15039 A1

(51) International Patent Classification[7]: G06F 17/60

(21) International Application Number: PCT/US00/22548

(22) International Filing Date: 17 August 2000 (17.08.2000)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
60/150,014 20 August 1999 (20.08.1999) US

(63) Related by continuation (CON) or continuation-in-part (CIP) to earlier application:
US 60/150,014 (CON)
Filed on 20 August 1999 (20.08.1999)

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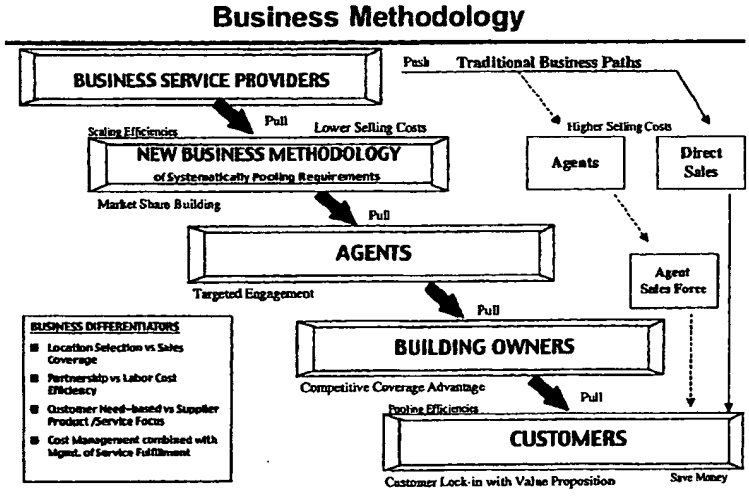
(81) Designated States *(national)*: AE, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CH, CN, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZW.

(84) Designated States *(regional)*: ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:
— *With international search report.*

[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: BUSINESS METHOD AND PROCESSING SYSTEM



(57) Abstract: A business method and a system that focuses on offering, coordinating, fulfilling and delivering an array of knowledge and productivity services that corporate customers require in today's context, the knowledge/business service combinations representing of mission-critical services with intellectual knowledge embodied, the fulfillment of which is done for a cluster of clients located in large buildings. The method provides for pooling of the requirements of various end users for scale-advantaged efficiencies in the processing and service delivery, and sharing such economies of scale generated with the building owners/property managers, who provide the venue from which to operate and enable such pooling to take place, and also with tenant occupants/users, thus creating a market pull. The fulfillment is done by outsourcing to service providers who are established experts in their fields and who have virtual access to new business opportunities according to the method of the invention.

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BUSINESS METHOD AND PROCESSING SYSTEM

Technical Field

This invention pertains generally to the fields of business methods, computing, and communication. More particularly, the invention pertains to the field of information technology-based service fulfillment, tracking, and coordination, as well as methods and systems of engaging in service delivery utilizing web-based connectivity, more popularly known as e-services.

Background and Summary of the Invention

The method of doing business traditionally used in the commercial office building industry by building owners is to find a commercial client willing to lease office space, making the client agree to pay a certain rental rate for use of a specified space for a specified term, and the building owner building out the space according to custom requirements of the client or simply making the space available for occupancy without such build-outs. The business has traditionally been one of leasing space and thereby providing a convenient location for the commercial client in question.

Over the years, however, the requirements of tenant customers have changed, primarily due to lifestyle changes and due to behavioral changes of the commercial client employees who are the tenant occupants in commercial buildings. The needs of clients have thus shifted from one of mere location, to one of a combination of floor space with certain services. As a result, the services expected or desired from building owners has been changing dynamically. For example, building owners some years ago added cafeterias and restaurants within their buildings to make it convenient for occupants to have access to food, beverages and snacks beyond the vending machine. Some building owners also added day care centers and health clubs. The whole idea behind adding such amenities was to make life convenient for the occupants so that they did not have to leave the building premises frequently, and so that the tenant occupants had a more productive atmosphere to work in, all of which contributed to the commercial client's satisfaction and continued occupancy.

Some building owners in the recent past have begun to introduce a concierge service that engages a concierge onsite to provide services such as theater ticket reservations and limousine reservation services to all tenant occupants. All of the above

services are usually added for the benefit of tenant occupants and have one thing in common in that they cost the building owner money to provide - either in the form of labor costs, as with concierge services; or in the form of subsidized rents and/or investments, as with health clubs and day care centers; or in the form of non-rental revenue generating floor space, as is required for seating outside the cafeterias. In spite many amenities already existing, changing market conditions coupled with time pressures on tenant occupants, the demand for services inside larger commercial office buildings continues to increase. In fact, some building owners refer to the commercial office building business as one of "pure services" rather than one of "floor space", since the flooring and the wall colors no longer offer any differentiation.

Certain other trends are taking place in the general market as far as companies or end users of services are concerned. For example, companies are beginning to outsource services in a big way. Estimates show that outsourcing is growing at over 30% annually. The main reason is that the information age has led to the emergence of so-called "smart markets" as defined by frequent turnover in the general stock of knowledge or information embodied in products or services and possessed by competitors and consumers. Customer behavior in smart markets is characterized by the twin requirements of freedom of choice and help in making choices. And, as a result, the relationship between customer and supplier, especially for business services, is gradually shifting from one of a captive supplier to one of strategic partnership. Moreover, with information more readily and freely available, competitive pressures are causing a shift in the pricing for business services from one of strategic partnership to one of market exchange. This means that customers today want custom-services for commodity-like pricing. Traditional paths used by individual business service providers to reach customers have included direct sales and sales through indirect channels such as through agents, value added resellers and retail channels. Moreover, emphasis in outsourcing has in the recent past started to shift from parts, components and sub-systems to greater unexploited potentials that intellectually-based systems offer, such as:

a) Obtaining of higher value and greater flexibility by the buyer,

b) Improving the buyer's capacity to stay current by interacting with best knowledge sources, and

c) Achieving cross-dimensional coordination, reduced capital investments, and shareholder value gains that could not be achieved otherwise.

Providers of business services typically have a focus in a single industry such as printing, marketing communication, video conferencing, consulting or office supplies. Individual business service providers do not consolidate or deliver requirements for varying business services that are typically provided by focused industry players, nor has any individual service provider thus far linked all the business services needed by companies to properly and efficiently conduct their administrative functions, either due to limitations of focus or of technology. With the recent advent of networking technology, and the bandwidth increase in web connectivity, commercial office buildings that are already wired or are being wired and connected within and outside the building for exchange of data, routing of information, and communication in general are now in a position to be connected to multiple individual service providers through a linking mechanism according to the business method of the invention. Large multi-tenant commercial office buildings today, due to their networked properties, can be viewed as a systematic collection of sophisticated consumers and knowledge workers all linked to each other and at the same time physically located in a vertical format, as in skyscrapers, or in a horizontal format, as in office parks - providing an ideal venue for consolidation, processing and delivery of business services. The business method of the invention relates to this very consolidation for processing and fulfillment while simultaneously sharing the benefits of the economies of scale and scope so derived with the building owners who provide the very venue.

Most large buildings with floor space exceeding 350,000 square feet are typically occupied by around 1000 people at 80% or greater occupancy levels, and at least 80% of the occupants are considered to be knowledge workers. This means that a multi-tenant commercial office building site of over 350,000 square feet, consisting of a collection of small, medium and large companies, assembled in some format within a single physical location, and networked to the web, is virtually equivalent to a Fortune 1000/large corporate account from a business potential standpoint. This is the new market, which hitherto did not exist and could not in the absence of connective technology that the business method of the present invention is addressing.

Because of the above recent market developments, there exists a new opportunity resulting from combining the needs of building owners, the need for new business services, and the existing technology that enables appropriate connectivity with individual service providers and tenant occupants to facilitate the service delivery seamlessly. This is the market niche presenting a new business opportunity according to the business method of the invention.

Most business services and office supplies that are purchased by companies, however, are based on established commercial relationships. The mid-size and small market segments, with roughly 70 million employed in the sector, are growing rapidly, whereas the Fortune 1000 companies' segment, which employs roughly 20 million people, has shown no net employment growth in over a decade. Proximity of service provider and cost-effective total solutions that enable customers to improve their productivity are sought after by companies, and the key to fulfilling this is a scale-advantaged service offering. The total commercial office building space in the US, for example, is roughly 10 billion square feet occupied by over 25 million knowledge workers. With business services being a hot new trend, and desired by knowledge workers, such buildings provide the ideal venue for a business services provider. The engagement of building owners as partners for the fulfillment of these services provides a method of continuing the relationship from the new service provider to the ultimate tenant user through the building owner, where the relationship already exists, and this is one of the key linkages according to the business method of the invention.

Using print-on-demand as an example, classes of current service providers include (a) the transaction/retail model which is essentially a mass-market business handling many jobs per day for many customers at convenient locations for walk-up traffic - such models avoiding highly complex equipment/transactions; (b) the service/quality model which is essentially a relationship business based on good quality and service for specialized jobs to a set of regular customers, such models being dependent upon specialists and strategic relationships between service providers and customers; and (c) the systems/contract model which is entirely a relationship model where the service provider deals with relatively few number of very large customers, such models requiring the customers to pay a premium for process reengineering and data-content management to achieve specific business objectives.

According to the method of business of the invention, the processes of order-entry, fulfillment, or tracking for business services will be facilitated by the networking within the building, and one ends up with an opportunity to create a new model, one that is a mix of the transactional and contract models, to deliver specific business objectives via complex equipment and complex transactions in a transactional format to users without them having to invest or pay a premium. This is achieved by pooling the requirements of many sophisticated users and outsourcing the pooled complex requirements to the world's best service providers who set up facilities onsite as one of the embodiments of the business method of the invention.

Planned investments in e-commerce systems as of mid-1998 exceed $23B over the next 3 years, and the future of electronic support will blend digital and human help. All these contribute to the evolution and market potential of the new business method.

Access to flexible capacity, intellectual capability, and fast service turnaround are key to providing a quality service business. When the acquisition of business services is not the core competency of the acquirer or buyer, they normally outsource the service to a qualified supplier for fulfillment. Some buyers specialize in procurement of particular business services and engage in the identification of individual service providers, price negotiations with such suppliers, as well as coordination of activities at the buyers' end. This has led to increased activity and increased number of transactions over time at the buyers' end, while requiring the buyers to update themselves on the technical aspects of services they need to procure but which are not their core competency. This has led to the spurt in outsourcing and the benefits sought by companies has gone beyond those associated with a product or service to the following:

a) convenience - one stop shopping and time-saving,

b) participation - cooperation, information exchange and customization, and

c) anticipation - proactive development of service offerings and innovation.

My invention provides a business method and a system that focuses on fulfilling an array of knowledge and productivity services that businesses require in today's context, the knowledge services representing a combination of mission-critical business services with intellectual knowledge embodied in such services, and the fulfillment of which is done for a cluster of clients located in large commercial office buildings, government buildings or universities. My invention provides a method for moving a "goods" and "services" business upstream, from one traditionally catering to users on a one to one basis predominantly by individual service providers, to one of a "transformation" business where, instead of merely providing tangible things or performing specified activities, one transitions to "achieving demonstrated outcomes for customers". The invention results in the creation of a market-share building vehicle for the adopter of the business method of the invention due to the efficient manner in which many buildings can be quickly assimilated into the process and the manner in which building owners are engaged, which is different from their traditional business method of "leasing space". Due to the possibility of consolidating the volumes and revenues generated in the buildings where the new business method of the invention is applied, and especially in networked buildings, enormous scale and scope advantages

become available. And, since the scale-advantage is shared with users, a customer pull is experienced as opposed to a sales push that one currently observes in the marketplace when they engage individual business service providers through the traditional methods of doing business.

Most suppliers and individual service providers, as mentioned earlier, focus on one specific product or service, and only sometimes on combinations of more than a few related ones, such as in business centers or retail outlets of service providers. But where such combinations of business services are offered, they are not interconnected either with each other, with the service provider, and the user on a long-term basis. Very rarely does one see combinations of unrelated business services being provided from a single source, and even if that were observed, the connectivity does not exist. In all cases, individual service providers focus on one company or corporate user at a time as their client. Custom services are almost always made available under specific agreements with somewhat inflexible terms and conditions, many of which bind the buyer and/or the provider to some degree due to a buyer/provider investment needed for on-going fulfillment. I use a networked system that delivers custom services, either directly or indirectly to buyers, with or without human intervention, and provides economies of scale and scope to all users, therefore making it possible to provide services at market-exchange pricing to corporate tenant occupants without any binding agreements. Moreover, the business method tracks a portfolio of services, for usage by type of service as well as by user, for total spend-rates and savings, and for benchmarking purposes, especially with corporate clients in similar industries. The business method also incorporates the building owner as part of the mechanism in the value chain to successfully bring clusters of customers together so they can be accessed simultaneously and the processing and fulfillment done in such a manner as to generate economies of scale and scope.

My business method of the present invention systematically pools the requirements of tenant building occupants and overcomes the deficiencies of the prior art by efficiently linking individual business service providers, who use traditional methods for selling or for fulfilling services, to ultimate users in multi-tenant commercial office buildings, based on the knowledge service requirements of such users. The building owner is one of the links according to the method of the invention in that the owner is a means to creating a venue for assimilating and fulfilling the service requirements of the various users who occupy the building, some of the service fulfillment being done in the venue, or onsite, and some being done offsite by connecting users via the venue to individual business service providers for direct fulfillment.

The method of business according to the invention creates a coverage advantage for promoting existing and new services based on the selection of the right building with a cluster of sufficient potential end users in one physical location either in a vertical or in a horizontal format. It thus delivers sales coverage cost efficiencies relative to traditional business development methods and offers advantages of low new business development costs for individual service providers. It also provides for riding on the marketing communication vehicles of building owners to promote the services and to make specific business service announcements, thus reducing market promotion costs relative to traditional business methods.

The business method also includes a method of utilizing select agents for finding the building owners in a given territory so that various buildings can be linked simultaneously for greater economies of scale and scope. The function of the agent engagement is to facilitate targeted engagement of the right multi-tenant buildings from a location, size, networking, occupancy and potential point of view. Agents follow a seven-step customer engagement process as is described later.

Once the building owners provide the venue, they benefit from the revenues and/or profits of the scaled and pooled service offerings provided according to the business method and as such become partners in the venture - benefiting from the space through the knowledge service promotion which has the potential to yield more than two times the rental equivalent of the floor space as might be achieved in a traditional lease of space. Also, they succeed in providing services generally desired by their tenant customers onsite, thereby increasing the value proposition of the floor space they rent out to tenants. This is where the method of the present invention generates higher returns and creates new value for building owners while simultaneously enabling them to provide the business services that are most needed in their buildings and thus providing new value to tenants also in the process.

Description of the Drawings

The invention is pointed out with particularity in the appended claims. However, other features will become apparent and the invention will be best understood by referring to the following detailed description in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a flowchart representing the business methodology of the invention as discussed above.

Figure 2 is a descriptive representing the principles of the value creation through the business methodology as discussed above.

Figure 3 is a schematic illustrating the domain of knowledge services typically outsourced by companies in the current market context as discussed above.

Figure 4 is an example of the market sizing for select knowledge services, essentially a scoping of the business method market potential according to my invention.

Figure 5 is diagram of a market niche identification methodology according to my invention.

Figure 6 is a schematic illustrating the value differentiation process for knowledge services.

Figure 7 is a customer engagement process illustrating a preferred process of building owner engagement and building the network of building owners according to my invention.

Figure 8 is a process of data flow schematic illustrating a preferred process of connectivity of the users to the service center for a print-on-demand service fulfillment according to an embodiment of my invention.

Figures 9 and 10 are a descriptive illustrating the design criteria for a preferred overall system for web connectivity according to my invention.

Description of the Invention

The invention is a business method that helps to create an e-service outsourcing enterprise delivering "productivity" to customers through an array of back-office knowledge services, allowing such enterprise to be a market pioneer utilizing scaling and pooling of knowledge services via operationally efficient technology-linked service providers, and to deliver value to end-users on-line as well as on-site through implementation "kiosks" or venues. The business method ensures that everybody in the chain either makes or saves money, and provides knowledge-based business services at the doorstep of tenant customers by partnering with building owners.

The business method of the invention attempts to:

1. Establish productivity service centers (PSCs), or kiosks or venues, in large commercial office or government buildings, preferably of 350,000 sq. ft.

or greater and occupied by at least 1,000 people, or in university-type settings with equivalent knowledge-worker populations, offering a complete range of "back-office knowledge and productivity services" in partnership with building owners/property managers;

2. Deliver pooled and scale-advantaged service efficiencies online through a business performance management system, as well as through skilled and knowledgeable front-line business people on-site, to the doorstep/desktop of tenant customers enhancing the value proposition of the buildings themselves;

3. Nurture the partnerships with two of the most valuable assets - operational excellence and a brand that can be built in this niche market, by delivering unparalleled productivity through cost-management and service fulfillment;

4. Increase the network of productivity site operations rapidly to a critical mass, offering significant on-going incremental value to existing and future customers once all such service centers are connected with each other.

FIG. 1 is a diagram of the business methodology as it links individual service providers according to my invention to clusters of end users located in a commercial office building. The pictorial representation of the relationships between the many groups engaging with each other is useful in understanding the traditional business paths and the path according to the invention. Here, the principal difference is that a market pull is created due to the value proposition of cost-management and service fulfillment. Moreover, when combined with the coverage advantage in the building context and the targeted engagement to reach building owners, the method of the invention lowers overall selling and marketing costs for knowledge/business services while generating economies of scale and scope that could not otherwise exist. The method also provides an economical means of reaching out to new potential customers for individual service providers by offering them instantaneous connectivity to all tenant occupants, thereby increasing their market penetration in the buildings/properties by as much as two to three fold immediately.

As seen in FIG. 2, which is a descriptive representation of the goals, objectives and guiding principles of the business method of the invention, the low distribution costs, combined with the optimized service mix, customization and personalization, and harmonized complex bundling of alliances with a seamless integration, is what provides value from the new business method.

As I define the knowledge services domain, as shown in FIG. 3, it includes web-enabled print on demand and variable data printing, image and text distribution, and repositories; digital, local and domestic courier services; office products and services

distribution and fulfillment; video communication, conferencing, video streaming, distance learning and corporate training; marketing communications such as direct mail, direct email, and data mining; audio and data services, such as voice messaging, call distribution, and internetworking; management consulting, including online consulting, purchasing, procurement, outsourcing, and strategy consulting; as well as systems integration such as data warehousing / mass storage; e-commerce live human interface; and business automation software / tech-support. The market size for these knowledge services in 1999 is of the order of $130B per year excluding information technology, which is roughly another $130B, and telecommunications, which is roughly an additional $300B. FIG. 4 shows the market sizing for a select few exemplary knowledge services in the preferred targeted market segment; the market size appears to be well over $1B. Thus, a mix of the services offered via a portal that is based on overall usage trends and is evolutionary in nature would be a preferred method of implementation according to the business method of the invention.

FIG. 5 is a market niche identification methodology that is utilized in finding new business opportunities within the knowledge services domain in the commercial office building market segment. It is clear that most existing players utilize a market-place strategy, which focuses only on physical aspects, such as a physical store-front location and a physical exchange of goods and services, whereas the method of the invention utilizes a market-space strategy to play in a segment that is not catered to by traditional suppliers either because (a) their business model is a retail model with high unit pricing, or (b) their business model is a dedicated service fulfillment for very large customers who singly can offer the economies of scale needed for the right pricing. The market-space strategy of the present invention separates content from context and infrastructure so a web-portal can be used as an interface for the tenant occupant to link them to the individual service providers via the venue onsite. There is a market niche where users when combined together can offer service providers economies of scale matching and exceeding that of very large users and where such users are willing to pay competitive commercial/store-front transaction pricing. This gives rise to an "arbitrage opportunity", if you will, for this particular market segment if they can be organized according the business method of the invention.

FIG. 6 shows the value differentiation process adopted according to the invention to differentiate the relative value of various factors important to tenant occupants / end users of knowledge / business services. The factors have been mapped out to compare the method of the invention to traditional methods. The particular factors relating to digitalization, online analytics and offering breadth and scope with productivity benefits

accruing to end users, are major sources of advantage according to the business method of the present invention.

According to the method of the invention, tenant occupants and end users, who become the ultimate beneficiaries of the economies of scale and scope that they generate and, therefore, get virtually locked into the system with the value proposition of (a) high quality, (b) low price, and (c) best in class individual service providers backing fulfillment, enjoy benefits including:

1. Trust due to existing relationship with landlord, participator with the provider of service according to the invention
2. Convenience - on-line and on-site; reliability and quick turnaround
3. Unified periodic billing and cost management, as opposed to multiple-transaction billing, with automated tracking as opposed to internal tracking at own higher costs
4. High quality and loyalty-based low pricing, based on ultimate outsourcing to high quality individual service providers / suppliers
5. Technology at doorstep with maintenance, training and safety-stock efficiencies
6. Ease of acquisition and confidentiality relative to current multiple-supplier model
7. One-stop shopping for all business services, based on needs, with a combination of e-commerce and human interface

The building owners, on the other hand, also observe new benefits including:

1. Improved value proposition for main business - greater than opportunity cost of space
2. Virtually captive business in growing market
3. Specialized knowledge-base, trained on-site staff, technical and marketing support
4. Ability to provide convenience and deliver on-going productivity to tenant customers, and thereby gain longer term tenants or tenants willing to pay a premium for the space relative to other office building space offered by competitors
5. New revenue opportunity with relatively little effort or investment
6. Opportunity to increase income and expand portfolio

7. Long-term partnership arrangement with no risk

Agents, according to the method of the invention, preferably follow a seven-step customer engagement process, as depicted in FIG. 7 and as described below:

1. Identifying building owner prospects and maintaining a minimum number of active prospects;

2. Selling the value proposition to the building owners by making executive level calls and formally making presentations;

3. Signing contracts with building owners at a given target rate per fixed time period;

4. Conducting surveys within the buildings by contacting a minimum tenant company population and attempting to obtain commitments for usage;

5. Building a relationships with the building owner and with key accounts / potential users within the building(s) and overseeing the quality service delivery;

6. Capturing user feedback, reporting on volume, revenue and quality drivers, and suggesting new growth opportunities for the building(s) in question; and

7. Sharing the learning by communicating the market knowledge gained with the principal and other eligible agents, and honing skills to refine the target market based on new learning.

Agents aid in the market creation in the market niche identified according to the invention with a geographical focus. The above processes allow for rapid evolution of the concept and speed in terms of taking just-in-time inventory management to a whole new level with multiple service fulfillment to multiple users.

Exemplary operational details have been shown in FIG. 8 demonstrating linkages and connectivity for print on demand service fulfillment from service center by an initiation from a tenant user desktop. An example of the networking within a service center according to the method of the invention has also been shown.

There are certain design criteria that need to be followed according to the business method of the invention to create a web-based system that allows for efficient

pooling, processing and fulfillment. This has been outlined in FIG. 9 and FIG. 10. The whole design criteria is based on a multi-location, multi-service, online and onsite business service outsourcing model that is web-based, flexible, scaleable, utilizes application server and relational database technology, and supports the order-taking, billing, fulfillment, reporting and tracking and trending processes, including routing of orders to appropriate locations/buildings/fulfillment centers of partners/others.

The system is one that is capable of handling multiple service streams, mass-customized contracts, custom and real-time pricing based on multiple criteria such as customer potential, spend-rates, volumes and overall usage and security for authentication and authorization.

My invention also includes a service delivery and dynamic balancing system that allows users to select the print function from the file menus of the browser or application they are working in to directly compress, encrypt, add meta-information to, and send files seamlessly to the web-based processing system of the invention. Traditional methods of sending files securely over the web include encrypting and sending via e-mail or file transfer done in several sequential steps. The service delivery system of the invention would automate this step without the need to close the application of file in use, and achieve the same results with less effort and at a faster speed. And, a dialogue box would accept meta-information pertaining to the file such as desired delivery time, mode of delivery, etc.. At the receiving end, the file would be received instantaneously, get routed to the server capable of scheduling the service request, send an instant message via a dialogue box back to the user confirming receipt of the service request and advising the status of the job while being processed.

I claim:

1. A business method that comprises:

(a) identifying at least one propert housing large number of separate departments with appropriate populations and infrastructure that justify the setting-up of a connected strategic outsourcing venue for knowledge / business services;

(b) selling the value proposition of knowledge / business services in a pooled manner to an entity in charge of the at least one property so that a physical venue can be provided for the setting-up of a strategic outsourcing of knowledge / business services center for pooling the requirements of users and for efficient fulfillment, processing and service delivery;

(c) convincing the entity to provide the venue for the service center;

(d) using at least one of existing web-based connectivity and a newly designed network in the property so that the tenant occupants / users within the building / property are able to submit orders to the service center online and so that the order logging, processing, routing and fulfillment may be done by at least one of online, onsite, and offsite and delivered to the user efficiently incurring the lowest possible distribution costs;

(e) partnering with individual service providers to fulfill the specific service offerings in a cost-effective manner by bringing economies of scale to them by pooling the requirements of all tenant occupants / users from multiple buildings so that experts from each service stream can be engaged to take ultimate responsibility for the service delivery to the end users, including at least one of installation of equipment, maintenance, supplies, training and key operators where applicable;

(f) providing multiple-services through flexible service combinations from the service center and offering a breadth and scope that is dynamic and based on user requirements surveyed periodically and as captured over time;

(g) providing cost-management to users of the multiple services in a portfolio-style management with manual and/or online tracking and trending of usage; and

(h) providing online billing, payment and transaction processing capability for multiple users, multiple services and multiple individual service providers, simultaneously, in real time and efficiently.

2. A market niche identification methodology that includes the steps of:

(a) identifying an arbitrage opportunity in a space between traditional suppliers of service transactions and those of contractual service providers to large end-users;

(b) pooling service requirements from groups seeking to buy services as smaller transactions and unable to pool such requirements in the ordinary course of their business independently;

(c) off-loading the pooled service requirements to a reputed efficient individual service provider for fulfillment; and

(d) generating a perpetual arbitrage opportunity by pricing unit service transactions substantially below transaction-sales service providers and bringing economies of scale and scope to end users so pooled.

3. A web-based processing system wherein a tenant occupant / end user is interconnected from a property via a computer network to a system that performs a method including the steps of:

(a) supporting at least one of order-entry, coordination, processing, fulfillment, billing, payment and reporting processes;

(b) providing order-entry confirmation for knowledge / business services immediately upon receipt and giving automated status feedback at predetermined intervals;

(c) providing customized service catalogs with customized and personalized pricing and selectively providing custom contracts based on pre-determined inputs;

(d) providing usage tracking and trending, including online reporting to users;

(e) providing online billing consolidated by at least one of a customerand the service provider, and providing capability to process online payments;

(f) routing orders automatically to one of an appropriate service center, fulfillment site, and server of an individual original service provider for ultimate processing and/or fulfillment;

(g) tracking flow-through items with details of recency, frequency, usage and monetary value;

(h) providing portfolio style cost-management online; and

(i) capturing preferences of users for new services as well as captures customer feedback on desired service levels and on-going customer satisfaction.

4. The business method of claim 1, utilized with a market niche identification method inlcuding the steps of:

identifying an arbitrage opportunity in a space between traditional suppliers of service transactions and those of contractual service providers to large end-users;

pooling service requirements from groups seeking to buy services as smaller transactions and unable to pool such requirements in the ordinary course of their business independently;

off-loading the pooled service requirements to a reputed efficient individual service provider for fulfillment; and

generating a perpetual arbitrage opportunity by pricing unit service transactions substantially below transaction-sales service providers and bringing economies of scale and scope to end users so pooled;

and further including a web-based processing system wherein a tenant occupant / end user is interconnected from a property via a computer network to a system that performs a method including the steps of:

supporting at least one of order-entry, coordination, processing, fulfillment, billing, payment and reporting processes;

providing order-entry confirmation for knowledge / business services immediately upon receipt and giving automated status feedback at predetermined intervals;

providing customized service catalogs with customized and personalized pricing and selectively providing custom contracts based on pre-determined inputs;

providing usage tracking and trending, including online reporting to users;

providing online billing consolidated by at least one of a customerand the service provider, and providing capability to process online payments;

routing orders automatically to one of an appropriate service center, fulfillment site, and server of an individual original service provider for ultimate processing and/or fulfillment;

tracking flow-through items with details of recency, frequency, usage and monetary value;

providing portfolio style cost-management online; and

capturing preferences of users for new services as well as captures customer feedback on desired service levels and on-going customer satisfaction;

and further including the step of providing benchmarking information and industry-specific advice to users relating to knowledge services.

5. The business method of claim 1, utilized with a market niche identification method inlcuding the steps of:

identifying an arbitrage opportunity in a space between traditional suppliers of service transactions and those of contractual service providers to large end-users;

pooling service requirements from groups seeking to buy services as smaller transactions and unable to pool such requirements in the ordinary course of their business independently;

off-loading the pooled service requirements to a reputed efficient individual service provider for fulfillment; and

generating a perpetual arbitrage opportunity by pricing unit service transactions substantially below transaction-sales service providers and bringing economies of scale and scope to end users so pooled;

and further including a web-based processing system wherein a tenant occupant / end user is interconnected from a property via a computer network to a system that performs a method including the steps of:

supporting at least one of order-entry, coordination, processing, fulfillment, billing, payment and reporting processes;

providing order-entry confirmation for knowledge / business services immediately upon receipt and giving automated status feedback at predetermined intervals;

providing customized service catalogs with customized and personalized pricing and selectively providing custom contracts based on pre-determined inputs;

providing usage tracking and trending, including online reporting to users;

providing online billing consolidated by at least one of a customerand the service provider, and providing capability to process online payments;

routing orders automatically to one of an appropriate service center, fulfillment site, and server of an individual original service provider for ultimate processing and/or fulfillment;

tracking flow-through items with details of recency, frequency, usage and monetary value;

providing portfolio style cost-management online; and

capturing preferences of users for new services as well as captures customer feedback on desired service levels and on-going customer satisfaction;

and further including the step of generating new organized knowledge of value to building owners, including identifying expansion plans of tenant occupants, growth markets, new service offering opportunities and/or to provide consulting services to existing and new tenant occupants / users / building owners.

6. A service delivery and load balancing system that automatically accepts, schedules and routes service requests to the appropriate fulfillment center based on desired service level, type of service, capacity utilization, load factors at various centers, and other such factors and immediately confirms receipt of the request to the requester with information pertaining to when and where the request will be fulfilled and confirms completion of the service request when done via an instant messaging system or a dialogue box that can be opened with at the click of a mouse containing meta-information, or via normal e-mail, where such communication is processed automatically by a processing system and communicated in real-time to the requester or user.

7. A service delivery and load balancing system that automatically accepts, schedules and routes service requests to the appropriate fulfillment center based on desired service level, type of service, capacity utilization, load factors at various centers, and other such factors and immediately confirms receipt of the request to the requester with information pertaining to when and where the request will be fulfilled and confirms completion of the service request when done via an instant messaging system or a dialogue box that can be opened with at the click of a mouse containing meta-information, or via normal e-mail, where such communication is processed automatically by a processing system and communicated in real-time to the requester or user, the system used in synchronization with a web-based processing system wherein the tenant occupant / end user is interconnected from a commercial office building / university / government property via the web to a system that performing a method including the steps of:

supporting the order-entry, coordination, processing, fulfillment, billing, payment and reporting processes;

providing order-entry confirmation for knowledge / business services immediately upon receipt and gives automated status feedback at predetermined intervals;

providing customized service catalogs with customized and personalized pricing and custom contracts, if needed, based on pre-determined inputs;

providing usage tracking and trending, including online reporting to users;

providing online billing, both consolidated and/or by customer / division / user - and has the capability to process online payments;

routing orders automatically to the appropriate service center or fulfillment site or server of an individual original service provider for ultimate processing and/or fulfillment;

tracking flow-through items with details of recency, frequency, usage and monetary value;

providing portfolio style cost-management online; and

capturing preferences of users for new services as well as captures customer feedback on desired service levels and on-going customer satisfaction,

the combination of which allows individual desktop and other users to select one of the print and some other function from the file menus of their applications / web-browsers to automatically carry out a method including the steps of:

directly compressing, encrypting, adding meta-information such as service request details and other processing and pertinent information according to a template via a dialogue box, and sending the respective open file/s seamlessly to the web-based processing system of the invention, at the click of the mouse / appropriate button;

immediately receiving a receipt or response back via a dialogue box, generated automatically from the web-based processing system of claim 3, confirming receipt of the file and the service request;

to receiving a confirmation that the fulfillment will or will not be done according to the desired time-line as entered in the meta-information with the service delivery request and a communication of the expected delivery time and date, based on a scheduling algorithm in the processing system; and

receiving confirmation when the service request is fulfilled and ready for delivery or pick-up as the case may be via a dialogue box.

8. The business method of claim 1 wherein the venue includes adequate floor space.

9. The business method of claim 1 wherein the step of convincing the entity to provide a venue includes negotiating terms that allow a flexible engagement within the at least one property.

10. The business method of claim 1 wherein the entity is paid for use of the venue on the basis of a share of at least one of revenues and profits generated from providing such knowledge / business services to the tenant occupants / users within the property.

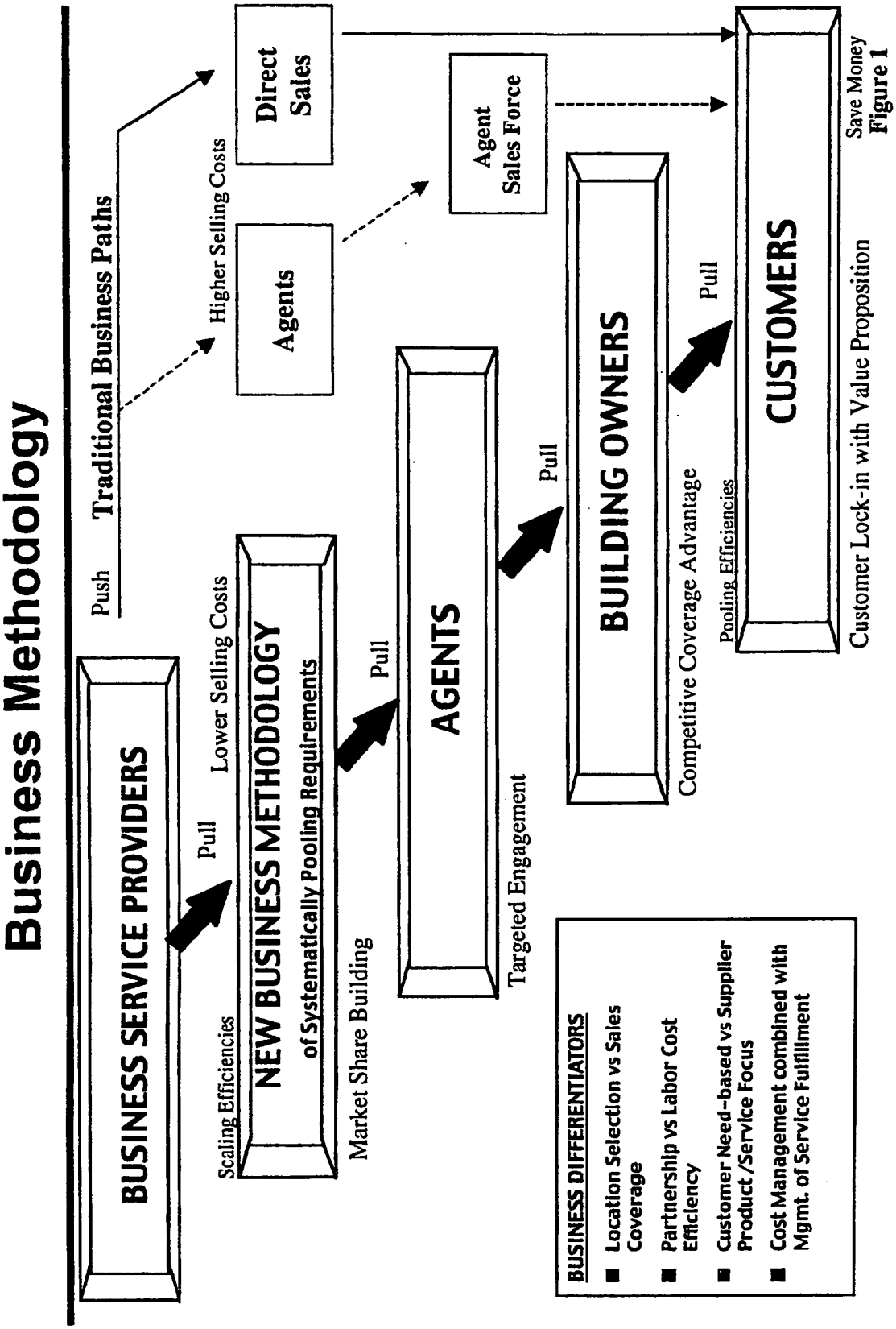
Business Methodology
BUSINESS SERVICE PROVIDERS
Push
Traditional Business Paths
Pull
Lower Selling Costs
Scaling Efficiencies
NEW BUSINESS METHODOLOGY
of Systematically Pooling Requirements
Market Share Building
Pull
AGENTS
Targeted Engagement
Pull
BUILDING OWNERS
Competitive Coverage Advantage
Pull
Pooling Efficiencies
CUSTOMERS
Customer Lock-in with Value Proposition
Save Money
Higher Selling Costs
Direct Sales
Agents
Agent Sales Force
BUSINESS DIFFERENTIATORS
Location Selection vs Sales Coverage
Partnership vs Labor Cost Efficiency
Customer Need-based vs Supplier Product /Service Focus
Cost Management combined with Mgmt. of Service Fulfillment

Figure 1

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Guiding Principles for Implementation

Goals	Objectives	Guiding Principles
• **Best Service & Product Cost**	— Targeted Engagement — 100% Coverage at Location — Low Cost Distribution — Optimized Mix	— **Best cost from innovative service providers that deliver the best set of benefits to customers** — **Service quality & speed of delivery**
• **Best Customer Value for Portfolio**	— Improved Customer Economics — Horizontal Linkages — Customization/Personalization — Enhanced Customer Interfaces	— **Optimized portfolio of services for customized productivity delivery** — **Dedicated and committed employees** — **Added value to customers**
• **Best Total System Performance**	— Bundles via Alliances — Harmonized Complex Interfaces — Improved & Integrated — Enabling Rapid Evolution	— **Unique system architecture with online analytics and seamless integration with service providers** — **Simple interfaces, fast and effortless**

Figure 2

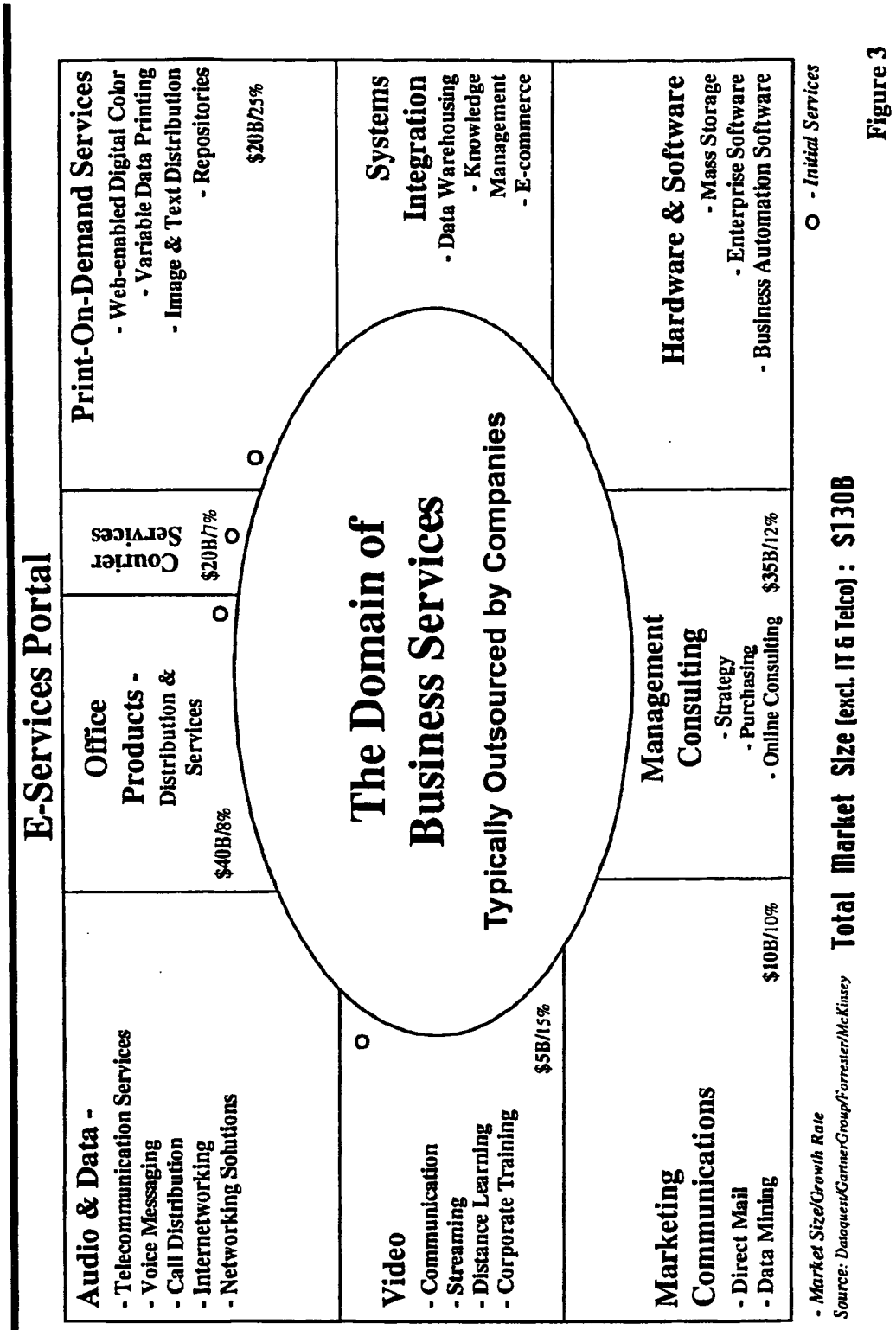
Knowledge Services Domain
E-Services Portal
Audio & Data -
- Telecommunication Services
- Voice Messaging
- Call Distribution
- Internetworking
- Networking Solutions
Office Products - Distribution & Services
$40B/8%
Courier Services
$20B/7%
Print-On-Demand Services
- Web-enabled Digital Color
- Variable Data Printing
- Image & Text Distribution
- Repositories
$20B/25%
Video
- Communication
- Streaming
- Distance Learning
- Corporate Training
$5B/15%
The Domain of Business Services
Typically Outsourced by Companies
Systems Integration
- Data Warehousing
- Knowledge Management
- E-commerce
Marketing Communications
- Direct Mail
- Data Mining
$10B/10%
Management Consulting
- Strategy
- Purchasing
- Online Consulting
$35B/12%
Hardware & Software
- Mass Storage
- Enterprise Software
- Business Automation Software
O - Initial Services
- Market Size/Growth Rate
Source: Dataquest/GartnerGroup/Forrester/McKinsey
Total Market Size (excl. IT & Telco) : $130B

Figure 3

Market Sizing

Market Sizing *Knowledge Services = Document Print on Demand, Office Supplies, Courier Services, Video Conferencing, Management Consulting, Marketing Communication*		
Total US Commercial Office Building Floor Space (M sq. ft. in 0.7M buildings)	Source = BOMA	10500
Number of Buildings Targeted for Market	Large Office Buildings Belonging to REITs	2000
Avg. Floor Space of Target Building (sq. ft.)		400000
Total Office Building Floor Space Targeted (M sq. ft.)		800
Percentage of All Office Building Floor Space Targeted		**7.6%**
Avg. Floor Space Occupied per Building Occupant (sq. ft.)	Source = BOMA	275
Percentage of Knowledge Workers in Office Building Population		80%
Number of Knowledge Workers in Target Market (M)		2.3
Total US Knowledge Worker Population out of 90M in non-agriculture (M)	Source = Bureau of Labor	72
Percentage of Knowledge Worker Population Targeted		**3.2%**
Market Size for Select Knowledge Services ($M)	Source = Dataquest, Gartner Group, Forrester, McKinsey	130000
Potential Consumption of Related Knowledge Services of Target Market (for Select Knowledge Services Proportionate to Targeted Population - $M)		4202
Market Sizing at 30% of Total Consumption Potential being Outsourced ($M)	Source = Outsourcing Institute	**1261**

Mix of Services for Offering via Portal

- **Based on Overall Usage Trends** - evolutionary with changing usage patterns
- **Based on Operationally Efficient Service Providers** - dependent upon best in class
- **Based on Strategic Partnering with Customers & Suppliers**
- **Based on Relationships built on in-depth Business Knowledge & Expertise**
- **Based on Productivity Delivery, Mutual Growth & Success** - true business partnership

Figure 4

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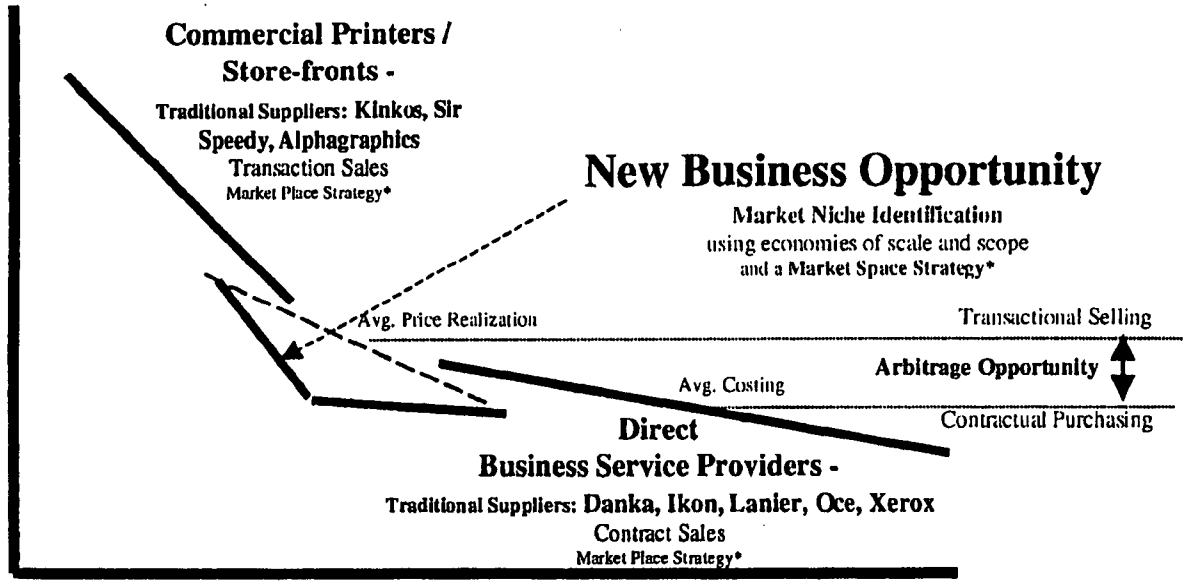
Market Niche Identification Methodology

Web-enabled Digital Print on Demand



Note:
* Market Place Strategy implies the need for a physical location, a physical exchange of material and a physical/face-to-face contact as the primary means of engaging in a service exchange, whereas a Market Space strategy separates the content, from the context and/or the infrastructure and allows the service exchange to be conducted without physical contact, or in other words the service order-taking and delivery/fulfillment can be done online.

Figure 5

Value Differentiation Process

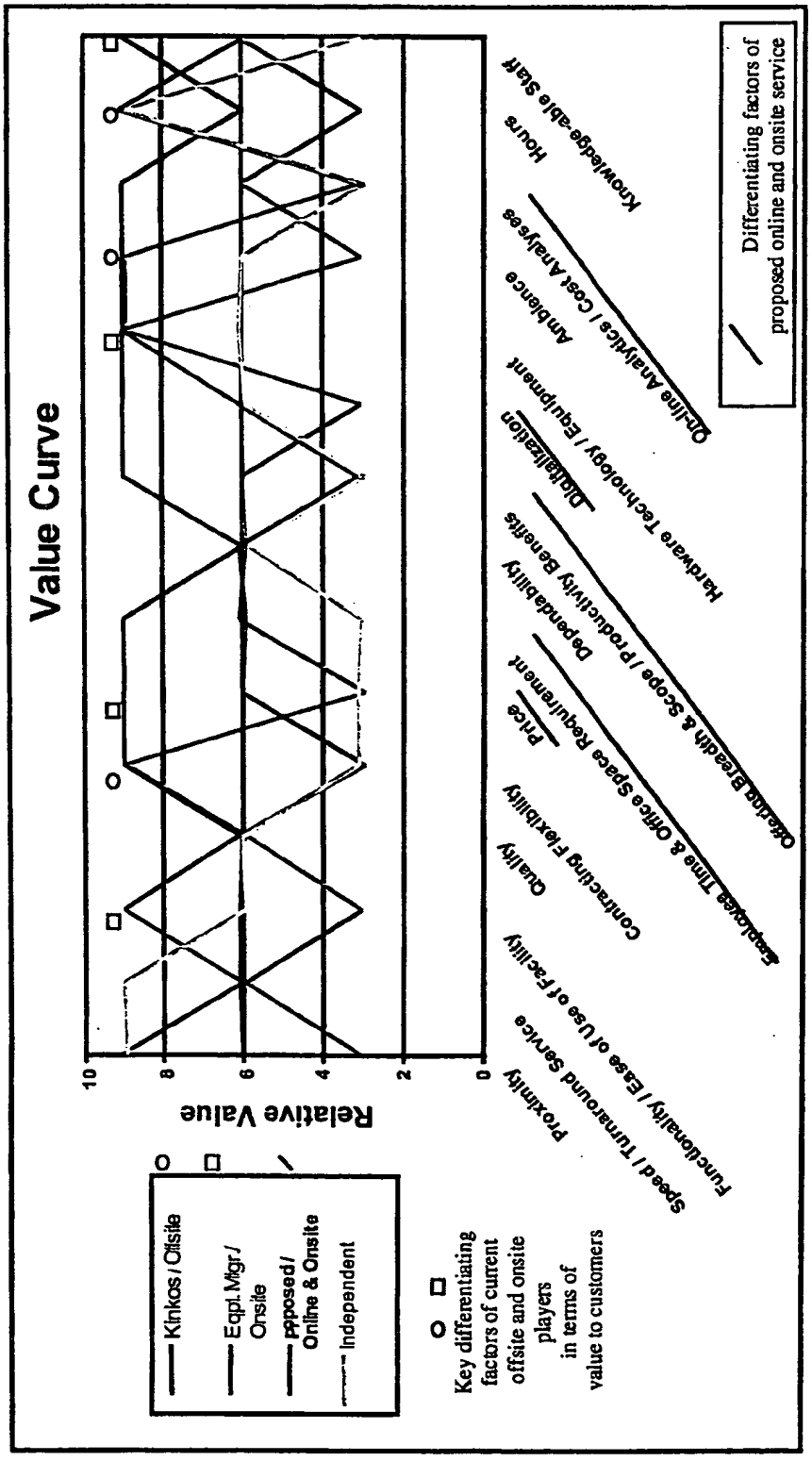


Figure 6

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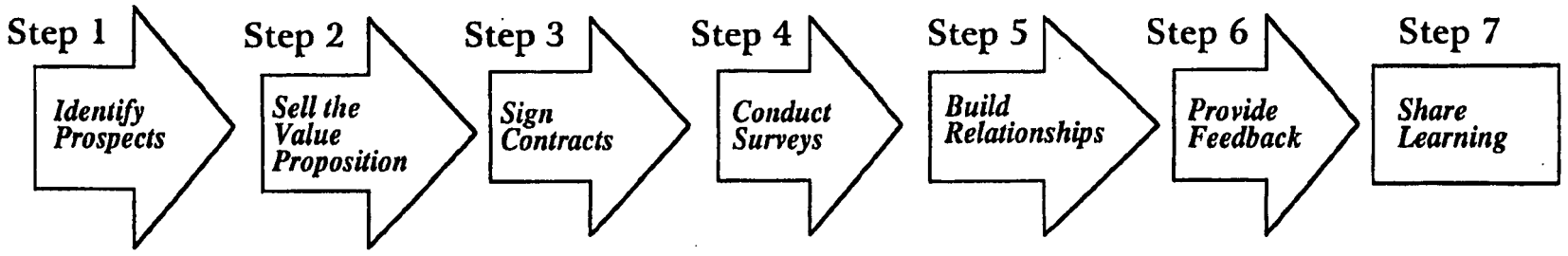
Customer Engagement Process

7 STEP PROCESS



- *Target multi-tenant buildings that meet square-footage criteria*
- *Maintain a minimum of three prospects in the pipeline*

- *Make executive level calls on building owners*
- *Make presentations and proposals according to guidelines*

- *Target rate of sign-on at min. one per quarter*

- *Make contact with min. 1/3rd of all tenants*
- *Obtain usage commitment (for quantified volume / spend-rate) from at least one major user*
- *Communicate bldg. contact list*

- *Maintain relationship with building owner and min. 3 key tenant accounts*
- *Oversee service quality delivery (incl. problem resolutions) and volume growth (relative to plan for bldg.)*

- *Capture user feedback and report on volume, revenue and quality drivers*
- *Suggest new growth avenues based on tenant needs*

- *Communicate market knowledge gained*
- *Hone skills and refine target market*

GEOGRAPHIC Exclusivity **Business OWNER to Building Owner** **SIMPLE Entry Mechanism** **ELECTRONIC Email/Personal Contacts** **Monthly Calls** **WEB ENABLED Reporting** **BUILD UP SPEED**

Figure 7

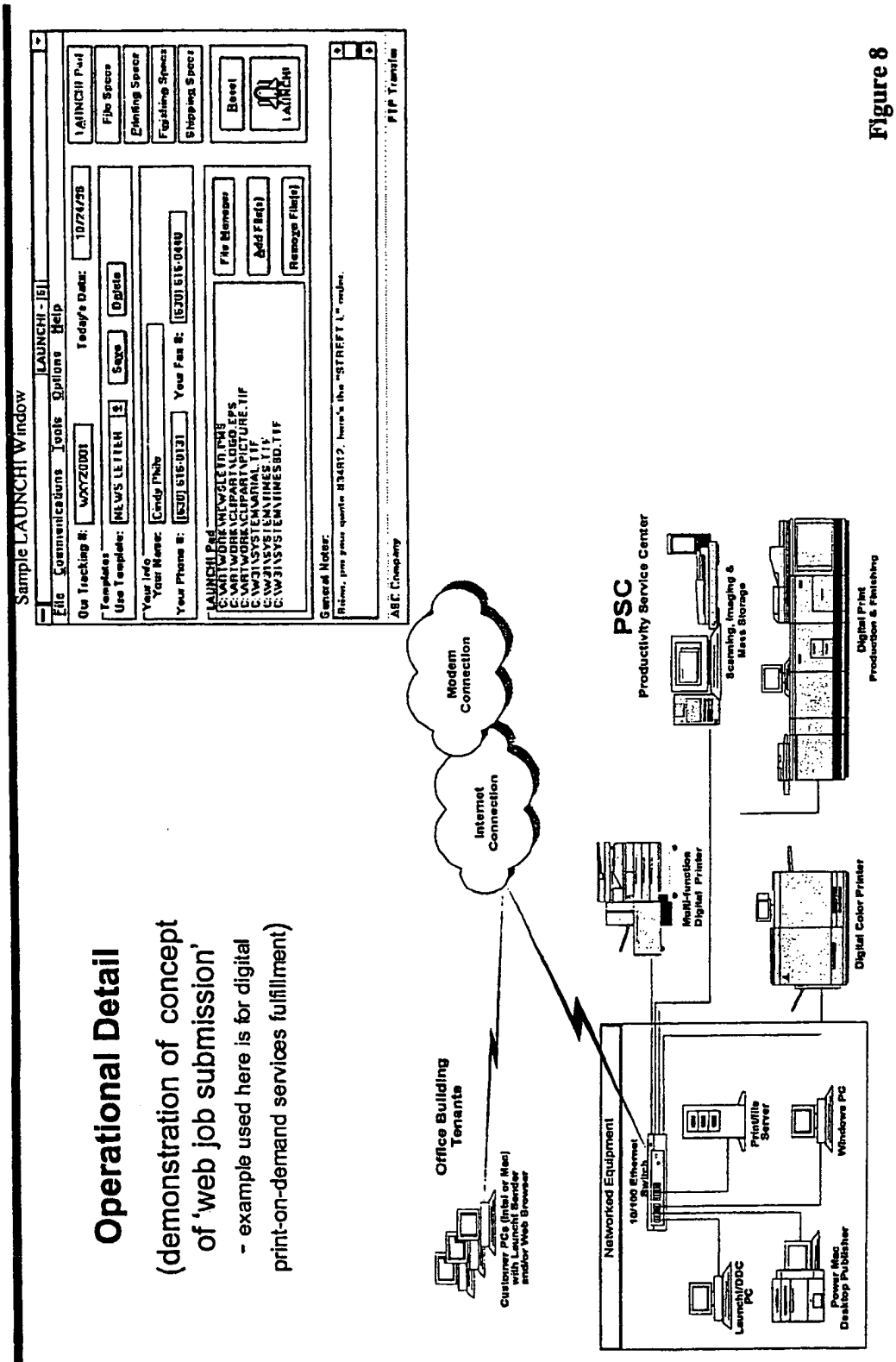

Process of Data Flow
Sample LAUNCH! Window
Operational Detail
(demonstration of concept of 'web job submission'
- example used here is for digital print-on-demand services fulfillment)
Modem Connection
Internet Connection
PSC
Productivity Service Center
Office Building Tenants
Networked Equipment
Digital Color Printer
Digital Print Production & Finishing

Figure 8

Web Connectivity Design Criteria [1 of 2]

- Multi-location, multi-service, online & onsite business service outsourcing - driven by fulfillment speed / responsiveness / job-status-updates / cost-management approach
- Web-based, flexible, based on scaleable technologies (application server and relational back-end database - that allows for data mining)
  - **Customization & Personalization - "On-line Analytics / Portfolio-management Style / Advice & Feedback"**
- To support the order, billing, fulfillment, and reporting processes

- Objectives
  - Order entry and automated status feedback
  - Tracking and trending including on-line reporting
  - On-line billing (consolidated or customer-division-wise) and on-line payment
  - Capturing of preferences for new services / customer feedback / levels of service desired / customer satisfaction
  - Tracking of direct billing of services / flow-through items

- Routing of orders to appropriate location / routing to suppliers (limited)
- Internal costing for management/control by location, service stream, customer, user
- Links to e-commerce sites with integration for order processing, tracking, trending, reporting and payment

Figure 9

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Design Criteria [2 of 2]

- **Services**
  - Categories
    - Streams
  - Customized Catalogs of Service/Merchandise Combinations
- **Contracts**
  - Customized, based on customer objectives and cost-management needs
- **Customers**
  - Buildings
    - Tenant Companies {Client administration interface for adding/deleting users/groups - services/budgets}
      - Departments / Budget Centers within Tenant Companies
        - Individual Users
- **Pricing**
  - Customer Potential-based
  - Volume-based
  - Spend-rate based
    - Savings tracking
      - Transaction type and frequency
- **Security** - authentication and authorization
  - Employee - Administration, Processing/Fulfillment, Management
    - Tenant Company Customers - Specific to Customer Activity Reporting/Tracking
      - Individual Users - Specific to User Activity Fulfillment/Reporting/Tracking
        - Individual User Release Mechanism onsite
      - Business Services Suppliers / Fulfillment Partners - Specific to service offerings

Figure 10

WO 01/15039 PCT/US00/22548

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US00/22548

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(7) :G06F 17/60
US CL :705/7

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

U.S. : 705/7,26,1,500,34,40,36,35

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

WEST, EAST, STN

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 5,920,846 A (STORCH et al) 06 July 1999, abstract, lines 1-5, col. 6, lines 17-61, col. 30, line 63-col. 31, line 3, col. 34, line 66-col. 35, line 4, col. 38, lines 3-6, col. 40,line 4-col. 41, line 7, col 63, line 43-col. 64, line 22, col. 82,line 58-col. 83, line 23.	1, 2, 4-9
Y		3,10
Y,T	US 6,115,690 A (WONG) 05 September 2000, col. 36, lines 10-53, col. 39, lines 33-65.	3, 10
A,P	US 6,055,512 A (DEAN et al) 25 April 2000	1-10
A	US 5,937,393 A (O'LEARY et al) 10 August 1999	1-10

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. ☐ See patent family annex.

*	Special categories of cited documents:	"T"	later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
"A"	document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	"X"	document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
"E"	earlier document published on or after the international filing date	"Y"	document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
"L"	document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	"&"	document member of the same patent family
"O"	document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means		
"P"	document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed		

Date of the actual completion of the international search	Date of mailing of the international search report
06 NOVEMBER 2000	01 DEC 2000
Name and mailing address of the ISA/US Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks Box PCT Washington, D.C. 20231 Facsimile No. (703) 305-3230	Authorized officer TARIQ HAFIZ James R. Matthews Telephone No. (703) 305-9463

Form PCT/ISA/210 (second sheet) (July 1998)★